

Finance Committee Minutes

December 12th 2013

The minutes of December 5th 2013 were distributed at 7:00Pm. The meeting was called to order at 7:05PM. Present were Mr. Edgar Zukauskas, Mr. David Herrick, Mr. Ira Yohalem, Mr. Mark Carson, Mr. Burt Imberman and Mrs. Prudence Spaulding. Mr. Nathaniel Yohalem, Ms. Tara White and Mrs. Michele Shalaby (selectmen) and, Mr. Joseph Krejci, Mrs. Maureen Krejci and Mr. Neil Crawford from the Ambulance Squad were present.

The minutes were accepted as amended. Mr. Carson 1st. Mr. Imberman 2nd passed unanimously.

Mr. Krejci, Mrs. Krejci and Mr. Crawford came to share with the committee some of the Ambulance Squad's planning for the next year's budget. The information that they shared was basically the same information that was shared at the December 2nd selectman's meeting when Mrs. Krejci and Mr. Chuck Loring (Fire chief) had come before that board.

The Ambulance Squad has been experiencing difficulty staffing the night time. They stated that there were ten trained and experienced EMT's; however when the ambulance goes on a call the state requires 2 EMT's to be present. The proposed plan would be to pay two EMT's each \$25 per night (from 6PM-6AM) so that there would be assured coverage! The proposal would also include paying an EMT's \$12.50 per hour when he/she served on an ambulance call. The Ambulance Squad hopes that this will somewhat recompense their volunteers for their service, and perhaps encourage others to become interested in serving the community in this way!

There were questions about how to cover these expenses. Mr. Krejci stated that they thought that there would be an added cost to the town of about \$18,000, and that this money would come out of the COMSTAR account. Although the information that was shared was not part of the formal 2015 budget as yet, and thus did not require a vote from the Finance Committee.

Discussion then centered upon the COMSTAR account. The COMSTAR account people collect the money from the insurance companies (for a minimal fee) for those patients who have used the ambulance. The money is then given to the Town. There was some question as to how much was in the COMSTAR account now, however Ms. Mielke (treasurer) was unavailable to answer this question! In answer to Mr. Imberman's question about those who have no money to pay for the ambulance, Mr. Krejci stated that the Ambulance Squad never refused to provide their service! Another question was whether the Ambulance Squad charged same amount for trips to Pittsfield as was charged when the ambulance went to Great Barrington. The answer

Prudence Spaulding
December 14th 2013

was that the payment was dependent upon the mileage, but the insurance payments were bound by Medicare , Medicaid and state law protocols. Mr. Krejci stated that although there are some mutual aid calls there have not been many.

In short if the night-time plan goes into effect, the cost for that will be \$18,250, the hourly rate (estimated) would cost about \$10,125, thus totaling \$28,375, if the yearly stipend figure was removed (\$10,500) the extra cost from COMSTAR would be \$17,875, The ambulance squad does not receive donation nor does it solicit donations.

Mr. Zukauskas reminded the committee that the town had an aging population and that it is very important to maintain this service. Mr. Krejci, Mrs. Krejci and Mr. Crawford left.

Mr. Herrick stated that there was a point of order, Mr. Loring the Fire Chief and the department head under which the Ambulance Squad Serves should have been present to approve of the proposals of the budget. Mr. Zukauskas apologized and said it was his fault that Mr. Loring had not been notified about the meeting.

The committee then began reviewing some existing budgets;-_

Council on Aging Expenses [70541.01] (\$200) level funded {\$200} Mr. Zukauskas 1st, Mr. Imberman 2nd passed with Mrs. Spaulding recusing.

Council on Aging Transportation [70541.00] (\$5,407) level funded {\$5,407} this is an assessed amount supporting the Southern Elderly Transportation Corporation which provides transportation to seniors and the disabled. Mr. Imberman 1st, Mr. Carson 2nd passed with Mrs. Spaulding recusing.

Senior Tax Work-Off Abatement Program [70560.01] (\$100) level funded {\$100} Mr. Yohalem 1st, Mr. Imberman 2nd passed with Mrs. Spaulding recusing

Cultural Council [50640.00] (\$1,000) level funded {\$1,000} Mr. Yohalem 1st, Mr. Imberman 2nd passed unanimously.

Conservation Commission Expenses [10123.00] (\$2,000) level funded {\$2,000} Mrs. Spaulding 1st, Mr. Yohalem 2nd passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55PM with the next meeting to take place in the New Year, and to be set accordingly.

Respectfully submitted,

Prudence Spaulding
December 14th 2013